VALEDICTORY ADDRESS

DELIVERED AT THE

FIRST ANNUAL COMMENCEMENT

OF THE

Homœopathic Medical College

OF NEW-YORK,

BY

PROF. J. BEAKLEY, M. D.

New-York:
PRINTED BY FRANCIS HART & CO. 63 CORTLANDT STREET.
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GENTLEMEN GRADUATES:—The words that have just fallen on your ears, proclaiming your admission into the ranks of a noble and time-honored profession, carry me back to a like memorable epoch in my own history, and enable me to feel, in some degree, those emotions that now agitate your breasts, and make you impatient to enter upon the race before you. Memorable epoch in the spring-time of professional manhood! How your hearts throb and warm as you close the wrinkled and half-obliterated pages of your text-books! As you turn your backs upon your Alma Mater, imagination, expanding her now confident wings, hurriedly carries you far away into the vista of the future, presenting only the golden fruits and fragrant flowers along the airy and delightful pathway, and heeding not the rough obstacles and thorny obstructions that encumber the field—the practical as well as contemplative sphere of professional duty and toil. Fortunate would it be for you if the fond hopes and anticipations of to-day could be realized in full fruition; fortunate, perhaps, if your Utopian dreams could never deceive you; your whole life one long gala day of triumphant success, and humanity relieved from the many ills and misfortunes now incident to its pilgrimage on earth. But God, in his good providence, has ordained it otherwise. "In the sweat of thy face shalt thou eat bread," is the price that we must all pay for the privilege of existence. And

although we have been taught to regard it as a *curse* uttered against human frailty and disobedience; yet, when we examine this *anathema* in the light of reason and common sense, it turns out to be, not a *curse*, but a *blessing* in disguise. As there is no sky, save the sky of the desert, without its clouds, so there is no life, save the barren and the desolate, without its toils. Allow me, then, to call back, with folded wings, those of you who vainly imagine that the great ends and purposes of professional life can be answered by a course of self-indulgence and inanition, or attained by some royal or erratic road.

> "When Hylas was sent with his urn to the fount,
> Through fields full of sunshine, and heart full of play,
> Light wandered the boy, over meadow and mount,
> And neglected his task for the flowers by the way."

We admonish you, then, in the first place, to take a clear and comprehensive view of the duties and responsibilities you have this day assumed as the ministering priesthood in the Esculapian fane. The time will soon arrive when you will be called upon to act as daily watchers at the bedside of the sick and afflicted—when the misfortunes and sorrows of our common and frail humanity will be the hourly subjects of your care and solicitude; and the position you will then occupy in the estimation of your fellow-men will be proportioned to the amount of moral and mental power you possess, and the prudence and interest you exhibit in combating and alleviating their misfortunes. But whether the flush and joy of returning health be the reward of your professional labors, or death and its sad accompaniments the sequel, let both the pride of success and the humili-

ation of failure be subordinated to the consciousness that, with an honorable assiduity, you have brought to the sick room a fair share of that high intelligence and skill which contemporaneous science requires and teaches.

Knowledge, then, is the great pre-requisite; and not alone that which is comprehended in the curriculum of instruction, in respect to which you have undergone a successful examination, and been awarded the doctorate of medicine. Although Anatomy and Physiology have made you all familiar with the structure of the human organism, and the laws which regulate and control it — although Medicine and Therapeutics have ascertained what are its abnormal conditions, and what the means of restoration — although Materia Medica and Medical Botany have marshalled before you the vast resources of the vegetable kingdom, and pointed out their toxicological effects upon the healthful structure — although Chemistry and Medical Jurisprudence have enabled us to analyze the organic composition of diversified tissues, and Medico-Legal wisdom has determined what is legitimate treatment and what criminal violence — although Surgery and Pathology have taught you to discern the character and extent of disorganization, and the propriety of medical or mechanical interference for the restraining or removing abnormal conditions, — yet, I say, a knowledge of all these sciences alone is insufficient to encompass the entire cycle of duties incident to suffering humanity, and elicit the confidence and respect of those who look to you for aid and consolation in the hour of affliction and sorrow.

What other knowledge beside, then, do you inquire, is deemed essential to meet this great desideratum other

than those comprehended in our curriculum of medical instruction? We will endeavor to answer. In the first place, then, we take it for granted that every one who enters upon the study of medicine has already acquired a thorough rudimentary education; as that is absolutely indispensable to render your pathway easy and the end successful. The sphere of education has, of late years, become greatly enlarged, and a more ample range of collateral knowledge is now demanded from all who wish to be regarded as well educated and accomplished physicians. At the present day, he who would prosecute his professional studies with the greatest success should have made himself familiar, if not with the language of Virgil and the voice of Homer, at least with the modern European classics. The writings of Hahnemann, of Liebig, and of Shoenline, should be read in their native language, whilst the labors of Louis, Brown-Sequard, and a host of French writers of celebrity, are in a great degree lost, if not studied in their original tongue. To those of you, then, who have not made yourselves familiar with this department of knowledge, or who deem it unimportant, let me urge you to turn your minds in this direction now, while as yet in the chrysalis state of your professional manhood, and while there is sufficient time at your command to make yourselves familiar at least with the French and German languages. It is in the power of each of you to do much for yourselves, without the aid of a teacher. With steady application and persistent endeavor, an excellent knowledge of the modern languages may be easily attained. Then will you be prepared to draw from the different fountains of truth pure, refreshing, and invigorating waters, which, while

they contribute largely to your own welfare and happiness, will qualify you again to dispense their regenerating influences among your fellow-men. Nor will this knowledge alone satisfy the demands of your peculiar mission and the requirements of the present age. You have embraced a new gospel of medicine which demands other and more elevated considerations than those which belong to a utilitarian and unintelligible philosophy. You are to be educated as psychological physicians, who regard the human organism not in its material aspect alone, but as subordinate to, and regulated and controlled by, vital and spiritual forces.

The dualism of some modern philosophers, who teach that the universe is composed of mind and matter, is not only unphilosophical, but repugnant to the original instincts of humanity, and can be refuted by unaided reason. There is no evil that has not its counteracting force of good attending it; and the revolting conclusion forced upon the intelligence of man by the promulgation of such materialistic philosophy, has served to arouse him from his deadly stupor, has impelled him to a more earnest and determined inquiry about humanity and God, and the erection of a more rational and permanent basis for the support of his irresistible faith. But this apprehension of the direful and desolating influences upon the welfare and dignity of humanity, is no modern birth of human thought. It is but the re-awakening of a refined and subtle impulse, which has impelled every true thinker to struggle after a loftier and more glorious conception of man's nature, and resolutely and unfalteringly thread all the cycles of imagination and reason, to unveil the sacred truths which lie enshrouded in those mysterious depths. All the master

minds of ancient philosophy believed and taught the doctrine of tripartite, instead of dual attributes, to the constitution of human nature; and in searching the records of the later Jewish and earlier Christian authorities, we find a similar theory promulgated.

In the Jewish catechism, in the "Macoeth" of the Talmuds, in the canonical books of Proverbs and Ecclesiastes, it was taught that man consisted of three elements, life [nepesh], intelligence [neschamar], and the divine principle [teschida], that attribute which enables man to aspire and gain admittance into the *Sanctum Sanctorum*, and become identified with the Eusophic world. The apostles also believed and propounded a similar theory. St. Paul frequently alludes to the three-fold nature of man, and in his prayer to the Thessalonians expressed the hope that their bodies, their spirits and their souls, might be preserved blameless unto the coming of the Lord.

Man possesses life in common with plants, mind in common with animals, spirit in common with God only. Life, mind and spirit are the three-fold elements of the universe, manifested in plants and animals, combined, consumated and realized in man. Body, mind and spirit are God's loan to man, which he is required to put out to use and return with interest. Life is a probation period; its end, education or development. The means of education are three: faith and reason for the soul, perception and knowledge for the mind, food and exercise for the body.

The due development of these elements in their true and changeless relations to each other, constitutes the harmonious unity of man. Nature is God manifested in the world, through force and law. Knowledge is nature, manifested in the mind through the same causes. Knowledge

therefore is a direct afflux from God, and its reception, in a right spirit, is a partial influx of the divine essences into ourselves. How important, then, that we place ourselves in a right state of receptivity to be impregnated with the true *afflatus*, and become humble and intelligent co-workers with Him in the great vineyard of life.

We form but a low estimate of our true mission, if we vainly imagine that our labors are limited to the materialistic considerations of our great and responsible calling. God forbid that we should stoop and grovel so low, and degrade and vilify our glorious science.

Let me earnestly entreat you, then, to take a higher, nobler view of the duties awaiting you, and study man in his true relations, his special psychological attributes, that you may be the better prepared to discharge those solemn obligations incident to your high calling.

The science of medicine has been greatly retarded through the prejudices that have prevailed, and still exist, in reference to all abstract metaphysical investigations.

Impressions have taken deep root in the minds of many that this branch of knowledge unfitted the mind for the contemplation and study more immediately associated with the practical duties of life; that the researches of the metaphysician served only to darken and bewilder the understanding, and teach pedantic jargon and useless and unmeaning transcendentalism. Hence arose the sarcasm, that the man who devoted his time to metaphysical studies was a fit subject for a lunatic asylum. Does the mind grow severe in proportion to its development and illumination? "I am the person you wish to see," said the illustrious Plato to a foreign guest, who desired an introduction to the great philosopher, expecting to meet a person very different in appearance to ordinary mortals.

Need we feel surprised at the occasional exhibitions of those peculiarities and prejudices, in minds accustomed only to observe the externals of life—minds that not only wonder at, but deprecate the contemplation and study of metaphysical philosophy?

Modern metaphysicians are not engaged in those meaningless and unprofitable speculations, as to whether the essence of mind is distinct from its existence; whether an angel could exist in *vacuo*, and the void still be perfect; or whether an indefinite number of souls could *pirouette* on the point of a needle. These, and similar seemingly senseless and childish speculations, occupied the attention of grave and learned schoolmen and theologians of former times, and served in the present age to throw derision, if not contempt, upon those who have ventured to study the laws of life and health, through a knowledge of man's intellectual and spiritual organization.

Although schoolmen were baffled in their attempt to determine the nature and essence of the soul, and similar incomprehensible subtleties, still we are not justified in any wholesale condemnation of these apparently profitless and Quixotic speculations. May we not rather, in the language of the founder of inductive philosophy, say of these zealous speculators and learned sophists, that, "in seeking for brilliant impossibilities, they sometimes discovered useful realities?"

Bacon, when referring to the researches of the alchemists for the philosopher's stone, says: "They performed the office of the husbandman, who, in seeking for hidden treasures, turned up the soil and pulverized the earth, thereby rendering it better fitted for the purposes of vegetation." Nor this alone did the severe and pro-

tracted laborers of those God-inspired devotees of science accomplish. They opened the pathway through the dreary and hitherto impenetrable wilderness to those who were to come after them, and pointed out the difficulties and obstructions of the way over which they had stumbled and fallen. In forming the value of any branch of philosophical study, we must be cautious how we apply the interrogatory, *cui bono?* Neither must we be ready to adopt the prejudices of the mathematician, who is unwilling to admit the truth of every principle that is not squared by his own formula; and who, when asked to read Milton's Paradise Lost, exclaims, "What does it prove?"

Are the hallowed emotions, the majestic imagery, the sublime aspirations, the melodies that have entranced the ear, quickened the pulsations of the heart, refined our manners, purified and elevated our thoughts, and thrown a ray of sunshine over the cheerless and dreary pathway of life, to be disregarded and contemned because they have no direct practical application to the daily avocations of life? No; let us not sustain the popular prejudices against these ennobling pursuits, as having no direct relationship with the science of medicine — pursuits which constitute the charm and poetry of life, and exert a powerful, though indirect, influence over the moral and intellectual advancement of nations, and the welfare and happiness of man. Their wonderful power to harmonize and soften the disposition is manifest whenever a due attention has been paid to their true inculcation. As it refines and elevates the mental faculties, and heightens the charms of social intercourse, so, also, does it ameliorate and expand the heart, expel

the poisonous influences of pernicious vices, and fit it for the reception of every good and generous virtue. From its rich and exhaustless storehouse we are enabled to draw materials for solid use, private instruction, and eternal embellishment! Composed of blessings both useful and ornamental, they can be made subservient to our interest or pleasure in this life, and furnish us with a passport to the most honorable and respectable stations in society.

In a state like this, where pleasure and pain are inseparably connected—where happiness cannot be found without alloy—where disappointments follow each other in quick succession—where impending calamities, which our limited capacities can neither foresee nor prevent, rush on and threaten the demolition of our earthly happiness—how essential it is for us to be prepared with resources to repel their force, and counteract, in a degree, their baleful effects.

> ————Desolator! who shall say
> Of what thy rashness may have 'reft mankind?
> Take the sweet poetry of life away,
> And what remains behind?

It has been eloquently and truly observed by Goëthe, when referring to the healthful influences of imaginative literature upon the heart and intellect: "When the man of the world is devoting his days to wasting melancholy for some deep disappointment, or, in the ebullience of joy, goes out to meet his happy destiny, the lightly-moved and all-conceiving spirit of the poet steps forth to be the *sun* from night to day, and, with soft transitions, tunes his harp to joy or woe. From his heart, its native soil, springs up the lovely flower of

wisdom; and if others, while waking, dream, and are pained with fantastic delusions, from their very sense, he passes the dream of life like one awake, and the strangest incidents are to him a part both of the past and of the future. And thus the poet is at once a teacher, a prophet, and a friend of gods and men. At the courts of kings, at the tables of the great, beneath the windows of the fair, the sound of the poet was heard, when the ear and the soul were shut to all beside; and men felt as we do when delight comes over us, and we stop with rapture, if, among dingles we are crossing, the voice of the nightingale starts out, touching and strong. The poets found a home in every habitation of the world; and the lowliness of their position exalted them the more. The hero listened to their songs, and the conqueror of the earth did reverence to the poet, for he felt that, without poets, his own wild and vast existence would pass away and be forgotten forever."

There is poetry everywhere, and in every thing. There is poetry in life. Its romance, the dreams that lull the youthful bosom in its hours of innocence, the visions of brightness and glory which hallow our morning of life, are the creations of poetry. To it belong the hopes that beguile our early existence, and the fairy forms that float along our summer sea, ere the dark tempest of the world arises and sweeps them from our sight for ever.

We walk forth under a cloudless sky; we gaze upon the moon, the "sun of night, and the stars, the flowers of heaven," and enjoy the gentle influences of feeling removed from the mockeries of life; the freed mind soars beyond the narrow confines of its prison; the world's

cold touch is forgotten, and all that is bright and beautiful, all that the heart worshipped with fond idolatry in its happier days, the viewless and visioned, are above and around us. Yes, it is in such an hour as this, when earthly cares are at rest, when ruined hopes and blighted prospects are no longer remembered, that the spell of song is felt and acknowledged.

Would it were in my power to communicate to others the healthful influences I have myself experienced, and the conceptions I have formed of the value, the practical importance to the physician, of a more general and intimate acquaintance with those branches of polite literature which tend to discipline the mind, elevate and refine the taste, awaken holy aspirations after truth, and keep in abeyance those poisonous and destructive influences that embitter existence, engender disease, and abridge the duration of human life.

The science of life has been truly designated the *science of ourselves* — of everything which we enjoy or suffer, or hope or fear. So truly is it the science of our very being, that we cannot cast a retrospective glance over a single thought or act, that has not some relation to phenomena that have been, in a greater or less degree, the subject of our analysis or contemplation.

The thoughts and faculties of our intellectual frame, and all which we admire as wonderful in the genius of others ; the moral obligations which, as obeyed or violated, are felt with delight or remorse ; the virtues of which we think as often as we think of those we love, and the vices we ever view with abhorrence or with pity; the traces of divine goodness, which can never be absent from our view, because there is no object in nature which

does not exhibit them; the feelings of dependence upon the gracious power that formed us, and the anticipations of that state of existence, more lasting than that which is measured by the few beatings of our feeble pulse,—these, in their perpetual recurrence, impress upon us the vast importance of a knowledge of the philosophy of the human mind.*

When referring to the influence of polite literature upon the mind, Burke justly observes, "whatever progress may be made towards the discovery of truth in this manner, we shall not repent the pains we have taken in it. The use of such inquiries is considerable. Whatever turns the soul inward upon itself, tends to concentrate its forces, and fit it for the greater and more exalted flights of science. If we can direct the light we derive from such lofty speculations upon the humbler fields of the imagination, while we investigate the springs and trace the sources of our passions, we may not only communicate to the taste a sort of philosophical dignity, but we may reflect back on the severer sciences some of the graces and elegancies of taste, without which the greatest proficiency in those sciences will always have the appearance of something illiberal."

Apart altogether from the practical utility of this department of science, it has other important, though indirect considerations which cannot be disregarded, but must demonstrate to us the indispensable considerations of the importance of a knowledge of our mental and moral constitution. The exercise and discipline of the mind, under the operations of its own workings, is of itself an advantage of incalculable benefit. The enforce-

* Brown.

ment of habits of accurate observation and reflection, of assiduous attention, of rigid induction, of logical ratiocination, prepares the mind for the reception of the principles of those sciences, which are connected with other departments of knowledge, supposed to be more immediately associated with the practical pursuits of life.

It is not my intention or desire, in urging the considerations of mental philosophy, to disregard or undervalue those departments of knowledge which have an almost exclusive reference to the physical sciences; and yet, I cannot but maintain that a too exclusive attention to evidences of the externals of life, renders the mind subordinate to the objects to which it is directed.

The very nature of such investigations tends to materialize all our thoughts and actions: man becomes a mere machine, operated upon and regulated by physical forces; or if we do occasionally turn our thoughts within, and contemplate the phenomena of our thoughts, we bring back with us, what Bacon in his nervous language calls, the "smoke and tarnish of the furnace." The mind seems to be broken down to the littleness of the objects it has been habitually contemplating, and we regard the faculties that measure earth and heaven, and add infinity to infinity, with a curiosity of no greater interest than that with which we investigate the angles of a crystal, or the fructifications of a moss. Such are the unavoidable and inevitable results of a too exclusive devotion to the study of mere physical phenomena; and I would take a still higher position, and maintain that it is impossible to prosecute any of the physical sciences with a high degree of accuracy and success without a thorough knowledge of the philosophy of the human

mind. There are other branches of philosophical studies, intimately allied to the science of mind, which demand your attention; but time will not permit me to enlarge upon them.

Whoever shall survey the requirements demanded of the aspirants for the honors and emoluments that belong to the learned professions — whether of law, of theology, of medicine, and even of arms or of commerce — will not fail to observe that, whilst the education and mental accomplishments demanded of the physician are of the highest order, and tested most rigorously, the honors and emoluments to which he can aspire or look forward to are far below those which either of the other professions can bestow. He, therefore, who is only ambitious of obtaining wealth and worldly distinction, and would, in after life, escape the bitter though unavailing regret that he had not chosen some other profession, in which the toil is less arduous and the worldly reward more flattering, should ponder well before he embraces the profession of medicine. The physician lives and dies in harness; a large share of his time and skill is a voluntary offering to public charity, particularly in the outset of his professional career — a voluntary and unrequited contribution to the public service. For those, however, who can enter upon it in a spirit of philanthropy and humility — who regard that as the noblest ambition which aspires to benefit mankind — whose faith is expressed in the maxim of Bacon, "*Efficacetor operari ad sublevanda, vitæ humani incommoda*" — such a man may fearlessly and truthfully consecrate his energies and life to the practice of medicine.

The blanks in the medical profession are many; the prizes but few. It requires of its votaries protracted and earnest industry, active energies and cheerful zeal. Though it affords them little of public emolument or honor, it nevertheless rewards them with the consciousness that, if they obtain but scanty thanks for the good deeds done in behalf of their fellow men — if they meet with ingratitude where they have had reason to expect kindness, and are treated with contumely and neglect where they have had a right to look for consideration and respect — they have at least the great reward of an approving conscience, which is the earnest of a brighter and a better world.

Are there, then, no exceptions to this rule of mediocrity and hard fortune for the devotees of the medical profession? I answer, Yes! There are a few oases in the desert, where now and then one can drink refreshing waters; but their number is small. There are a few, favored of heaven, who are commissioned to bring forth the undiscovered principles from the *arcana arcannisima*, by virtue of which new conquests are achieved over the agonies of disease, and our powers greatly enlarged for the furtherance of an euthanasia when the passage through the Domain of Terrors can no longer be postponed. These are exceptional men, who can scarcely be viewed under the ordinary limitations of conventional privileges and opinions. Their quick and intuitive perception, their keenness of intellectual vision, their weight of judgment, demand a wider range into the daily opening fields of the collateral and formative branches of our science. Such men, guided by the light of genius and inventive ability, return with a rich argosy of gems, add

fresh jewels to the crown of science, and new adornments to the literature of the profession they have chosen. But the paths they tread so grandly are not for every one. Their high endowments, their reveries of genius, their dreams of future glory, these belong to themselves alone. It is with no wish of disparagement or detersion that this distinction is drawn: the same holds true of other avocations as with medicine. On some few has been conferred that fine gift of inventive genius which enables its possessors to develope new relations, and affirm new truths in science, whilst the mass of their brethren must remain satisfied and happy in *applying* the truths discovered for them. It was thus, by *a priori* reasoning, that Goöthe enunciated the doctrine of the metamorphosis of plants; thus that Oken stumbled on a skull amongst the Hartz mountains, and exclaimed, illluminated by a sudden flash of thought, that it was vertebrated; thus that Aloyseus Galvani first laid the foundation of his great discovery, from observing the touch of his scalpel upon the leg of a frog which he was preparing for his food; thus that the astronomer, La Verrier, foreshadowed the existence of the planet Neptune, while yet it lay hidden, in the depths of space, from mortal eye; it was thus, also, that our own immortal Hahnemann confirmed the immutable law, "*Similia similibus curantur*," while observing the toxicological effects of drugs upon the human organism, and thereby laid the foundation of a principle that has already become the parent of a philosophy that is embraced by many of the most enlightened and accomplished intellects of the age. Millions yet unborn will bear laurels to adorn the shrine of Hahnemann. But, as I before remarked, to a

few only is this power vouchsafed. The number is but small of those privileged to extend the boundaries of knowledge, or to erect a pedestal that shall rise above the confines of the time, from which they may survey the past and future, and observe, as with the eye of intuition, the landmarks of scientific progress upheaving from the ocean of the future.

Yet, however sublime and ennobling the attributes of such intellects as these, those of a more mediocre cast are not the less valuable and important. Without the aid of such minds to apply and enforce these laws over a wide and varied field, the labors of the former class would be of little value to mankind. It is the combined and yet diversified labors of the many that carry out and apply the formularies of our science as an art; and unless this is effected, little indeed would be accomplished of value. We might live amid philosophical abstractions, but the soul of humanity would die. There is, then, work and promise for all. Strive, therefore, to be something in your own order; but confound not your own being with the duration of an order. He who does not rise superior to the breastwork of his order, is no hero within it. An order, as such, makes only puppets. Personality makes worth and merit Necessity comes at last, and compels with an iron sceptre. He who listens to and obeys the laws of his own nature, will do much to prevent necessity. Often he will need only to beckon with the lily staff of Oberon, and new flowers will spring up instead of withered ones; and if the blossom-time is past, nourishing fruits will come to maturity. This blossoming-time of intellectual vigor, young gentlemen, is yet yours. See to it that you nurture and guard it well.

Attend to the cultivation of your mental faculties, by attempting to think correctly, and true wisdom will be acquired. Wisdom! so slow and difficult of attainment —so distinct from knowledge, yet dependent upon it— so God-like an attribute that it is to be early and ardently sought for, as forming the brightest element in the character of every man, in whatever degree it may exist. In the language of that high-minded but afflicted poet, Cowper, whose very sufferings lead us not improbably to regard him in a more exalted light, we would say:

> ——— ——— ———"Knowledge dwells
> In minds replete with thoughts of other men;
> *Wisdom*, in minds attentive to their own.
> Knowledge, a rude, unprofitable mass,
> The mere materials with which wisdom builds,
> 'Till smoothed and squared, and fitted to its place,
> Does but encumber whom it seems to enrich.
> Knowledge is proud, that he has learned so much;
> Wisdom is humble, that he knows no more."

There are other, and no less important, subjects that come legitimately under the sphere of the psychological physician, but time will permit me only to refer to a few of them.

I would speak of the relation of the physician to those who have entrusted their lives to his judgment and skill. This relation is of a grave and responsible nature. The mental and moral influence that he is capable of exercising under such momentous occasions has a great and all-absorbing import, and carries with it a power more potent than has ordinarily been attributed to it.

The general bearing of the physician in the presence of the sick—his conversation, either with the invalid or friends, his expression of countenance, all are scrutinized

and interpreted with an accuracy that conveys impressions either of a beneficial or a disastrous influence. In proportion, then, as we estimate these influences in their intellectual and moral agencies, and the facility in their adaptation to the idiosyncrasies of those he is brought in contact with, will he have the gratification of recognizing the healthful and often all-controlling power.

In the exercise of our responsible duties, we are often compelled to sit by the couch of the dying, and witness the triumphs of the great enemy of man, "grim-visaged death." It may be our duty and privilege on such serious and painful occasions to discharge medico-theological functions, either in conjunction with the recognized pastor, or alone in his temporary absence. Let us not lightly or thoughtlessly neglect this solemn and important duty.

It may be our privilege to aid those whose especial duty it is to administer the precepts of our holy religion, and to prescribe the limitations and character of their ministrations, without subjecting ourselves to the imputation of irreligion or officious interference. Much harm is not unfrequently caused by an over-zealous or indiscreet clergyman, who, addressing the fears of the invalid under certain mental or physical states, produces an amount of nervous depression that destroys the good that might be effected, and hastens the prophetic result.

Whatever tends unnaturally to excite or depress the nervous system while under abnormal influences, tends forcibly to prevent the healthful operation of remedial agents, and to destroy the good that might, under more favorable circumstances, have been accomplished. The object of all religious ministrations to the sick should be

to soothe, not to irritate — to elevate, not to depress — to inspire a hopeful vigor and an unfaltering reliance upon the Author of all good, and the dispenser of every blessing.

"What painter," says the author of the *Velvet Cushion*, "who has sketched the portrait of our Saviour, ever thought of arming Him with a thunderbolt? No; love was His weapon; and this is the weapon His ministers should employ."

> "Thou, fair Religion, wast designed,
> Beauteous daughter of the skies,
> To warm and cheer the human mind —
> To make men happy, good and wise;
> To point where sits in love arrayed,
> Attentive to each suppliant call,
> The God of universal aid,
> The God and Father of us all."

The physician, while attending under such painful and afflicting circumstances, has it within his power to disabuse the dying of those imaginary and unphilosophical impressions that haunt and disturb the minds of the superstitious, who believe the act of death to be accompanied with physical agony. We are not justified in reasoning from analogous phenomena that the muscular convulsions and spasmodic respiration (simulating actual diseases), which are often manifested in the act of dying, are the results of intense physical or mental suffering. To our finite conceptions, consciousness of pain has ceased, while some of their outward manifestations yet remain.

It would illy become me to attempt to draw aside the veil that shrouds from mortal eye the condition of the spirit in the act of disengaging itself from its clayey

tenement and winging its way to its empyrean home. In vain have the most exalted intellects, the sublimest imaginings, the grandest flights of poetry, attempted to convey to our understanding a conception of the state of the soul whilst traversing these "awful passages." The contemplation of death awakens in many minds peculiar and attractive influences. The mysteries that enshroud it, its sublime import, its association with all that is tender, endearing and pathetic, hallow it with a charm that renders it impossible for a man possessed of large and magnanimous impulses to be wholly indifferent.

What more touching and sublime than the transition of the soul from one state of being to another? What more wonderful and mysterious than the passage of the disembodied spirit through the "valley and shadow of death?" Who can interpret the feelings of the traveler, or adequately portray the visions of the place?

Contemplating this subject, however, in a more practical form, and referring to the duties of the physician in that solemn hour, I would suggest the propriety, should circumstances seem to demand it, of some one of the members of the family remaining at the bed-side of the dying in his last moments, as the close proximity of some beloved friend may sustain and render the mind tranquil in its last conflict, even though there should be no apparent consciousness remaining.

"It is a little thing to speak a phrase
Of common comfort, which by daily use
Has almost lost its sense; yet on the ear
Of him who thought to die unmourned, 'twill fall
Like choicest music, fill the glassing eye
With gentle tears, relax the knotted hand
To know the bonds of fellowship again,

And shed on the departing soul a sense
More precious than the benison of friends
About the honored death-bed of the rich,
To him who else were lonely, that another
Of the great family is near and feels."

In the last moments of Louis XIV., turning to his physician, he exclaimed, "It is not so difficult to die as I supposed!" In referring to this memorable circumstance, Voltaire remarked, "All men die with composure who die in company." He imagined that the unfaltering courage of the soldier in the conflict and heat of the battle is fairly attributable, in no small degree, to the fact of being surrounded by those who, in the event of his death, will bear witness to his courage and prowess. Therefore, he concludes, by a parity of reasoning from the observation of himself and others, that the actual contact of some one near and dear to the dying man supports him in the final conflict, during which the spirit becomes disembodied.

It is not unfrequently our sad office to apprize the invalid of his situation, to inform him that each declining sun grows paler on his vision, that he must prepare for the awful event that awaits us all—that he must *die!* I would recommend, in view of the powerful, depressing influences upon the shattered physical frame, that you observe great care in not prematurely robbing the invalid of the only prop, frail and fragile though it be, upon which his and your hope of recovery rests. To pronounce the sentence of death, to inform a man that his "sands of life have nearly run," to bring around the couch of the dying the loud and inconsolable wailings of distress, would, if there should yet remain a reasonable expectation of his recovery, hasten the sad event.

But occasions may present themselves, nevertheless, when our imperative duty compels us to divulge to him the precariousness of his condition, and point out to his friends the necessity of preparing themselves for the last sad offices of life.

The advice of Sir Henry Halford in relation to the conduct of the physician on this trying and momentous occasion, I regard as worthy of your consideration and imitation. "And here you will forgive me, perhaps, if I presume to state what appears to me to be the conduct proper to be observed by the physician in withholding or making the patient acquainted with his opinion of the probable issue of a malady manifesting mortal symptoms. I own I think it my duty to protract life by all possible means, and to interpose myself between him and everything that may aggravate his danger; and unless I have found him averse to do what is necessary in aid of my remedies, from want of a proper sense of his perilous situation, I forbear to step beyond my proper province to offer any advice which is not necessary to promote his cure. At the same time, I think it indispensable to let his friends know the danger of his case the instant that I discover it. An arrangement of his worldly affairs, in which the comfort or discomfort of those who are to survive him are involved, may be of unspeakable importance; and a suggestion of his danger, by which this object is to be accomplished, will naturally induce a contemplation of his more important spiritual concerns.

"If friends can do their good offices at a proper time and under the suggestions of the physician, it is far better that they should undertake them than the medical adviser.

They can do so without destroying the hopes of the patient, for he will still believe that he has left him an appeal to his physician beyond their fears; whereas, if the physician lay open his danger to him, however deliberately, he yet runs a risk of appearing to pronounce a sentence of condemnation to death, against which there is no appeal, *no hope*. But friends may be absent, and nobody near the patient in his extremity, of sufficient influence or pretension to inform him of his dangerous condition. And surely it is lamentable to think that any human being should leave this world unprepared to meet his Creator and his Judge, 'with his crimes broad blown.' Rather than so, I have departed from my strict professional duty, and have done that which I would fain have done, in similar circumstances, for myself, and have apprised my patient of the great change he was about to undergo.

"In short, no rule not to be infringed sometimes, can be laid down on this subject. Every case requires its own considerations; but you may be assured that, if good sense and good feeling be not wanting, no difficulty can occur which you will not be able to surmount with satisfaction to your patient, to his friends, and to yourself."

Quite independently of a correct appreciation of our individual accountability as moral agents, the simple cultivation of faith in the protecting power of a direct spiritual influence over the acts and interests of man, has in it a powerful therapeutic aid, which, when judiciously exercised, will rouse the system from the depressed conditions induced by disease, and enable us to mitigate, if not wholly avert, that *crisis* which the wisest and best of mankind have approached with something of apprehension and awe.

Occasions not unfrequently present themselves when it is in the power of the physician to relieve the mind of the invalid from some all-absorbing and disturbing influence, and bring about the state of serenity and confidence so essential in that awful and inevitable hour. During the last moments of Dr. Goldsmith, the sagacious eye of his physician discovered that the mind of the poet was greatly disturbed by some deep and painful emotion. Kindly taking his hand, he said, "I perceive, sir, that your mind is ill at ease." The afflicted poet at once unburthened the secret, and enabled his good physician to render his last hour tranquil and happy.

Whilst sincerely believing in a direct spiritual interposition upon the mind, I nevertheless deem it a duty to suggest my convictions that God, in His inscrutable designs, often accomplishes His purposes through secondary agencies; and if we but rightly interpret our own holy impulses, we shall readily recognize the cycle of duties incumbent upon the intelligent psychological physician, and which enable him rightly to appreciate and apply those spiritual adjuvants so essential to the temporal and eternal welfare of man. How ennobling, then, the aims and duties of an intelligent physician! How wide the field that opens before him, and in which your future life is to be spent! Rightly appreciating your great mission, and entering upon its responsible duties with an honest, earnest and patient zeal, a rich reward will crown your noble efforts and manly achievements. But if neglectful of your true interests and high responsibilities, then will the days and years that follow surely be overshadowed with mists and clouds, whose deepening gloom will obscure your pathway to the grave. Yours is a noble,

a glorious calling! In the day of sorrow — in the hour of pain, when the spirit is humbled by suffering — in the awful moment of dissolution — it is your noble prerogative, like guardian angels, to hover about the couch of the dying, and take care that the last ray of light, flickering feebly in the socket, shall not receive one rude blast to hasten its extinction.

Finally, then, let me admonish you to lay fast hold on the truth, as it has been given you by the almoners of your faith, in that great law, "*Similia similibus curantur*;" and, while living, nobly defend its great principles, that in dying you may bequeath it, untarnished, a sacred legacy to those who come after you. Yes, yours is indeed a noble, a philanthropic profession. Amid the calumnies that will assail you — the obloquy and reproach to which you will be exposed — the contumely and cold neglect that you will daily meet with from those who differ from you in the fundamental principles of the science of medicine — ever remember that it is not unto man you are to "render an account of your stewardship;" but, bearing a heart filled with noble purposes and high resolves, maintain an equal firmness through good and through evil report, and the assaults of bigotry will fall harmless on your innocent heads.

Bigotry, did I say? Bigotry! — she has no head, and cannot think — no heart, and cannot feel. When she moves, it is in wrath; when she pauses, it is amidst desolation; and if she ever stops in her infernal flight, it is to alight upon some kindred rock, and whet her vulture fangs for keener rapine, while she replumes her wings for a more sanguinary desolation. She leaves no retreat unvisited. She has invaded the walks of private life, and

stained the ermine of judicial robes. She has entered within the sacred precincts of the church, and from its holy altars fulminated her anathemas against all who will not "bend the knee to Baal." She has even dared to stalk across the threshold of our national Capitol, and there left the stains of her polluting touch upon the fair escutcheon of our national glory and honor. Her appetite is not appeased. She thirsts for *blood* — and may yet demand the sacrifice of a nation's proudest, dearest hopes, to satisfy her unnatural rapacity.

God pity the bigot! and remove from the darkened chamber of his soul the clouds of folly and ignorance that enshroud him. And now, *farewell!* Amid life's stern conflict,

> "So live, that when *thy* summons comes to join
> The innumerable caravan that moves
> To that mysterious realm where each shall take
> His chamber in the silent halls of Death,
> Thou go not like the quarry slave at night,
> Scourged to his dungeon; but, sustained and soothed
> By an unfaltering trust, approach thy grave
> *Like one who wraps the drapery of his couch*
> *About him, and lies down to pleasant dreams.*"—BRYANT.

GRADUATES.

COLEMAN, H. J.	Rodney, Miss,	Physician, his Duties and Responsibilities.
COULTON, WM. C.	Woodstock, C. W.	Maintenance of the Animal Organism.
COULTON, F. G.	Mt. Elgin, C. W.	Dysentery.
DARLING, H. H.	Worcester, Mass.	Morbus Coxarius.
FLETCHER, A. C.	N. Y. City,	Dyspepsia.
FRENCH, E. M.	Elmira, N. Y.	Diabetes Millitus.
HAIT, CHAS.	Modena, N. Y.	Rival Schools of Medicine.
HUNTOOR, J. W.	Lowell, Mass.	Diseases of the Liver.
HUTCHINS, H. S.	Batavia, Mass.	Stepping Stones to Medical Success.
LASIUS, BENJ.	New-York,	Nature and Constitution of Man.
LEONARD, E. D.	Syracuse, N. Y.	Causes of Disease.
MOSMAN, N. A.	Springfield, Mass.	Variola disenta et confluens
MUNN, W. W.	Niagara F's, N. Y.	Typhoid Fever.
MURRELL, WM.	Mobile, Ala.	Chlorosis.
PRATT, W. M.	New-York,	Duties of the Physician in the Lying-in Chamber.
PARKHURST, G. H.	Florida, N. Y.	Arthritis.
PAYNE, N. M.	Bath, Me.	Mentagra.
ROSEBERRY, C. J.	Easton, Pa.	Typhoid Fever.
SCHLEY, E. B.	Columbus, Ga.	Epidemic Cholera.
SKIFF, CHAS. W.	Brooklyn, N. Y.	Medical Schools of Europe.
SMITH, S. A.	St. Albans, Vt.	Hernia.
STARR, E. W.	Columbus, Ga.	Intermittent Fever.
THOMPSON, A. H.	St. Thomas, C.W.	Pneumonia.
TRAVERS, N. H.	St. Catherines, "	Similia Similibus Curantur, the legitimate offspring of the old school.
VERDI, C. S.	Lombardy, Italy,	Homœopathic Science of Medicine.
WHITTELSEY, J. H.	Marion Co., Ga.	Billious or Remittent Fever
WORCESTER, S. H.	Gardner, Me.	Croup.

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